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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 002263

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT LULA
DA SILVA, 2 SEPTEMBER 2004

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN J. DANILOVICH. REASONS: 1.4
(B)(D).

1. (U) Ambassador formally presented his credentials to President Lula da Silva in a ceremony at the Planalto Palace in the afternoon of 2 September 2004. As per Brazilian protocol custom, Ambassador was one of three chiefs of mission presenting credentials to the president (the Venezuelan ambassador proceeded and the Hungarian came after), with each ambassador meeting with the president separately and then, in turn, inspecting troops and hearing national anthems on the ramp of the palace's main entrance.

2. (SBU) On receiving Ambassador Danilovich and a delegation of senior mission officers, Lula welcomed the Ambassador to Brazil and launched immediately into a friendly question and answer session on the status of the U.S. presidential campaign. Ambassador explained the historical function of the conventions, noting that in modern times they have become pro forma "coronations," but in the past they were actual venues for candidate selection. Lula mused that Brazil's party conventions are also pro forma, but last a maximum of a single day. Lula then asked which states would be decisive in terms of votes. Ambassador discussed the battlefield states and also the general importance of his home state of California. He invited the president to visit California, meet with the governor and California companies with technological, agricultural and commercial interests in Brazil, and address Stanford University.

3. (U) Turning to the upcoming UNGA and the 20 September conference in New York on international hunger initiatives hosted by Brazil, Lula said Brazil is expecting over fifty heads of state to participate. He asked about U.S. representation, and whether Secretary Powell would attend the UNGA. Ambassador Danilovich explained that President Bush would be formally represented by a presidential envoy, Agriculture Secretary Veneman, who would be prepared to read a message from the President.

4. (U) Lula turned to the subject of Brazil's economy, voicing his satisfaction at the positive indicators on growth coming in over recent weeks. Lula outlined the history of boom-bust economic recovery plans in Brazil over the past twenty years, and said his mission is to establish a sustained and rational growth dynamic that will be the basis for a realistic and healthy economic model for Brazil over the long term.

5. (C) In a pull aside with Ambassador Danilovich at the meeting's conclusion, Lula noted that he had always been treated with respect and kindness by President Bush, for which Lula warmly expressed his gratitude.

6. (C) Comment: President Lula was friendly, animated and relaxed, taking 15 minutes to converse with the Ambassador in an event that often lasts only the time needed for pleasantries and handshakes. He used the meeting to register a message about his intention to stay the course in an economic policy he feels is being vindicated, and to make clear that he is seeking the highest possible level of USG representation at the Brazil-sponsored hunger conference in New York. It is evident that Lula feels strongly about the subject of the conference and also has his personal and international prestige linked to the event. In that sense he may be concerned about a USG presence that may appear to him as limited in the context of a heads of state meeting on American soil.

DANILOVICH